

# SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND



## 2007 ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

**“Commitment to Excellence”**

**SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND**  
**2006-2007**  
**ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

**Section I: Executive Summary**

**1. MISSION AND VALUES**

**MISSION**

The mission of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind is to provide individualized vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services, and prevention of blindness services to blind and visually impaired consumers leading to competitive employment and social and economic independence.

**VALUES**

1. We value the abilities, dignity and potential of consumers who are blind and visually impaired.
2. We value compassionate, professional and committed staff.
3. We value progressive, effective leadership.
4. We value human, fiscal and information resources.
5. We value the support of the community, the Legislature, the Executive Branch and the Federal Partners.
6. We value employer partners who are receptive to training and employing our consumers.
7. We value collaboration with other organizations, training programs and community based programs.

**2. Major achievements from past year**

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind (SCCB) experienced a 12% increase in the number of new referrals in all consumer service programs in FY 2007. Prevention efforts resulted in the provision of 98 cataract removal procedures that stabilized or restored vision so that consumers could either obtain or maintain gainful employment and have an improved quality of life and independence. Three hundred and nine (309) individuals met their vocational objectives and were closed as successful rehabilitants.

**3. Key Strategic Goals**

- Maintain the number of competitive employment outcomes
- Maintain independence and quality of life in the home and in the community
- Prevent, stabilize or restore the loss of vision
- Provide the human resources leadership, guidance and tools necessary to accomplish the mission of the agency
- Provide the administrative leadership necessary to ensure accountability, effectiveness and efficiency

- Implement a comprehensive information system that encompasses the organizational knowledge, management and strategic levels

#### **4. Opportunities and Barriers**

The greatest opportunities continue to be the agency's growing relationships with private industry and community services providers. With these partnerships, the agency is afforded the opportunity to expand the possibilities for employment, exchange information with other agencies and increase public awareness of the services and programs offered by the agency. Other opportunities include good relationships with the SC General Assembly and Executive Branch of government.

#### **5. How the accountability report is used to improve organizational performance**

The Accountability Report is a snapshot of the agency that allows a close viewing of strengths and weaknesses. It is used as a guide for making modifications to the Strategic Management Plan (i.e. action plans and performance measures) that may need to be considered or made for the months to follow. The agency reviews progress toward achieving the goals of the strategic plan on a quarterly basis. These reviews are used to develop corrective action plans. The reviews can also be used to demonstrate achievement of goals and motivate staff.

## **Section II: Business Overview**

### **Description of Organization**

Section 43-25-10 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina creates the South Carolina Commission for the Blind and charges the Commission with the responsibility of providing the following programs of services: Vocational Rehabilitation, Independent Living, Prevention of Blindness and Children Services. The agency is funded through Federal funds from the Department of Education for its major program of vocational rehabilitation. In addition, Federal funds are also received for the independent living services program. The Prevention of Blindness and Children's Services Programs are state funded programs.

#### **1. Number of employees**

The agency has 126.5 authorized FTE positions which include 1 unclassified position. A total of 117 of these authorized positions are filled. The agency also has 17 grant/temporary positions.

#### **2. Operation Locations**

The agency has headquartered offices in Columbia, South Carolina along with a district office. There are district offices located in Charleston, Conway, Florence, Greer and Greenville. The agency shares space with the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department in Aiken, Greenwood and Rock Hill. Space is also shared with the South Carolina Employment Security Commission's One Stop Employment Office in Walterboro. The personnel in the district offices include a counselor and a counselor assistant for the Vocational Rehabilitation, Business Enterprise, Children Services and the Prevention/Older Blind programs. There are also Orientation and Mobility and Home Management Instructors located in the district offices. There is not a counselor and instructor in each of the district offices for each of the programs. However, the counselors and instructors are assigned territories to ensure that all of the programs are covered statewide with a counselor and instructor. The district office personnel work directly with the consumers in their home and work environments.

## Accountability Report Appropriations/Expenditures Chart

### Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations

Major Budget Categories	FY 05-06 Actual Expenditures		FY 06-07 Actual Expenditures		FY 07-08 Appropriations Act	
	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds
Personal Service	\$3,597,715.00	\$1,446,805.00	\$4,234,112.00	\$1,306,804.00	\$4,234,112.00	\$1,565,559.00
Other Operating	\$1,335,227.00	\$192,670.00	\$2,224,342.00	\$783,024.00	\$2,328,342.00	\$292,670.00
Special Items	\$396,949.00	\$20,000.00	\$61,179.00	\$0.00	\$61,179.00	\$20,000.00
Permanent Improvements	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Case Services	\$2,370,003.00	\$689,589.00	\$4,923,401.00	\$1,171,226.00	\$4,923,401.00	\$1,209,639.00
Distributions to Subdivisions	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fringe Benefits	\$1,118,483.00	\$429,747.00	\$1,330,034.00	\$411,806.00	\$1,330,034.00	\$474,034.00
Non-recurring	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,818,377.00</b>	<b>\$2,778,811.00</b>	<b>\$12,773,068.00</b>	<b>\$3,672,860.00</b>	<b>\$12,877,068.00</b>	<b>\$3,561,902.00</b>

### Other Expenditures

Sources of Funds	FY 05-06 Actual Expenditures	FY 06-07 Actual Expenditures
Supplemental Bills	\$0.00	\$0.00
Capital Reserve Funds	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bonds	\$0.00	\$0.00

Figure II-1

## Major Program Areas

Program Number and Title	Major Program Area Purpose (Brief)	FY 05-06 Budget Expenditures	FY 06-07 Budget Expenditures	Key Cross References for Financial Results*
II. Rehabilitation Services	Provide training leading to competitive employment and independence	<b>State:</b> \$618,157.00 <b>Federal:</b> \$3,525,281.00 <b>Other:</b> \$282,204.00 <b>Total:</b> \$4,425,642.00 <b>% of Total Budget:</b> 44%	<b>State:</b> \$1,335,412.94 <b>Federal:</b> \$4,097,887.96 <b>Other:</b> \$84,290.26 <b>Total:</b> \$5,517,591.16 <b>% of Total Budget:</b> 42%	<b>7.3-1</b>  <b>7.3-5</b>
III. Prevention	Prevent, stabilize or restore loss of vision through medical services and Prevention Awareness Programs	<b>State:</b> \$649,130.00 <b>Federal:</b> \$385,818.00 <b>Other:</b> \$297.00 <b>Total:</b> \$1,035,245.00 <b>% of Total Budget:</b> 10%	<b>State:</b> \$874,609.10 <b>Federal:</b> \$381,751.84 <b>Other:</b> \$0.00 <b>Total:</b> \$1,256,360.94 <b>% of Total Budget:</b> 10%	<b>7.3-3</b>
V. Employee Benefits		<b>State:</b> \$418,898.00 <b>Federal:</b> \$678,307.00 <b>Other:</b> \$21,278.00 <b>Total:</b> \$1,118,483.00 <b>% of Total Budget:</b> 11%	<b>State:</b> \$411,811.61 <b>Federal:</b> \$647,354.42 <b>Other:</b> \$5,182.75 <b>Total:</b> \$1,064,342.78 <b>% of Total Budget:</b> 8%	

**Below: List any programs not included above and show the remainder of expenditures by source of funds.**

<b>Remainder of Expenditures:</b>	<b>State:</b> \$749,753.00 <b>Federal:</b> \$631,569.00 <b>Other:</b> \$11,500.00 <b>Total:</b> \$1,392,822.00 <b>% of Total Budget:</b> 12%	<b>State:</b> \$1,005,742.74 <b>Federal:</b> \$585,057.69 <b>Other:</b> \$0.00 <b>Total:</b> \$1,590,800.43 <b>% of Total Budget:</b> 12%
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## **5. Key Customer Segments Linked to Key Products/Services**

As defined in Section 43-25-20 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, the SCCB's key customers are those who meet the definition of blindness and severe visual disability as follows:

- (1) "Blindness" is defined as that level of central visual acuity, 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting glasses, or a disqualifying field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than twenty degrees and which is sufficient to incapacitate an individual for self-support, or an eighty per cent loss of visual efficiency resulting from visual impairment in more than one function of the eye, including visual acuity for distance and near, visual fields, ocular, mobility, and other ocular functions and disturbances;
- (2) "Severe Visual Disability" is defined as any progressive pathological condition of the eye or eyes supported by acceptable eye examination, which in the opinion of the examiner may or will result in legal blindness.

In keeping with the mandate from the General Assembly, the SCCB has developed and maintained programs for South Carolina's blind and severely visually impaired citizens. The programs offered by the agency are unique and include:

- 1) Vocational Rehabilitation: Provides services which lead to competitive employment and independence;
- 2) Business Enterprise Program (BEP): Provides job training, stand development, consulting services, job placement and stand maintenance to carry out the mandates of the Randolph-Sheppard Act;
- 3) Prevention of Blindness: Provides services to prevent, stabilize or restore the loss of vision by providing appropriate medical services to detect eye diseases in their early stages;
- 4) Older Blind: Provides services to increase independence and quality of life in the home and community by providing adjustment to blindness skills training for individuals age 55 and older;
- 5) Children Services: Provides counseling and guidance, establishes a plan of service and coordinates provision of services within the school system for blind and visually impaired children (birth to age 13) and their families;
- 6) Rehabilitation Center: Provides unique blindness skills which are designed to enhance blind and visually impaired adults' ability to become more independent and employable; Curriculum includes Orientation and Mobility, Communication Skills, GED Preparation, Remedial Education, Home Management, Braille Literacy, Wood Shop and Physical Education;
- 7) Telecommunications Center: Provides general customer service as well as company specific skills training to consumers for the growing customer service industry;
- 8) Training and Employment: Provides training to consumers on basic through advanced adaptive technology skills that are needed to be competitively employed

There is a critical interaction between all programs/services of the SCCB in order to achieve its mission. The established programs allow the agency to service South Carolinians of all ages who meet the criteria outlined in Section 43-25-20 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina.

## **6. Key Stakeholders (other than customers)**

In carrying out the provision of services for all programs, the agency works closely with medical physicians, ophthalmologists and optometrists throughout the state. The professionals in the medical field refer a substantial number of the agency's customers. The agency is a resource for the medical community in helping their patients. Others who benefit from the services the agency provides are the family members of our customers. The training and services the agency provides establishes independence for the customer and therefore indirectly benefits their family. The agency also provides assistance to employers in setting up adaptive equipment/tools that may be necessary for the employment of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The agency also provides assistance to school districts by providing them with the resources and tools for school age children.

## **7. Key Suppliers**

The business community is a key supplier in the agency carrying out its mission. In order to achieve the agency's primary strategic goal of maintaining the number of competitive employment outcomes, a partnership with South Carolina industry is essential. The agency works closely with employers in explaining and demonstrating the benefits of employing individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired. The optometrist and ophthalmologist in the state provide assistance by conducting low vision exams for clinics sponsored by the agency in Columbia, Greenville and Florence.

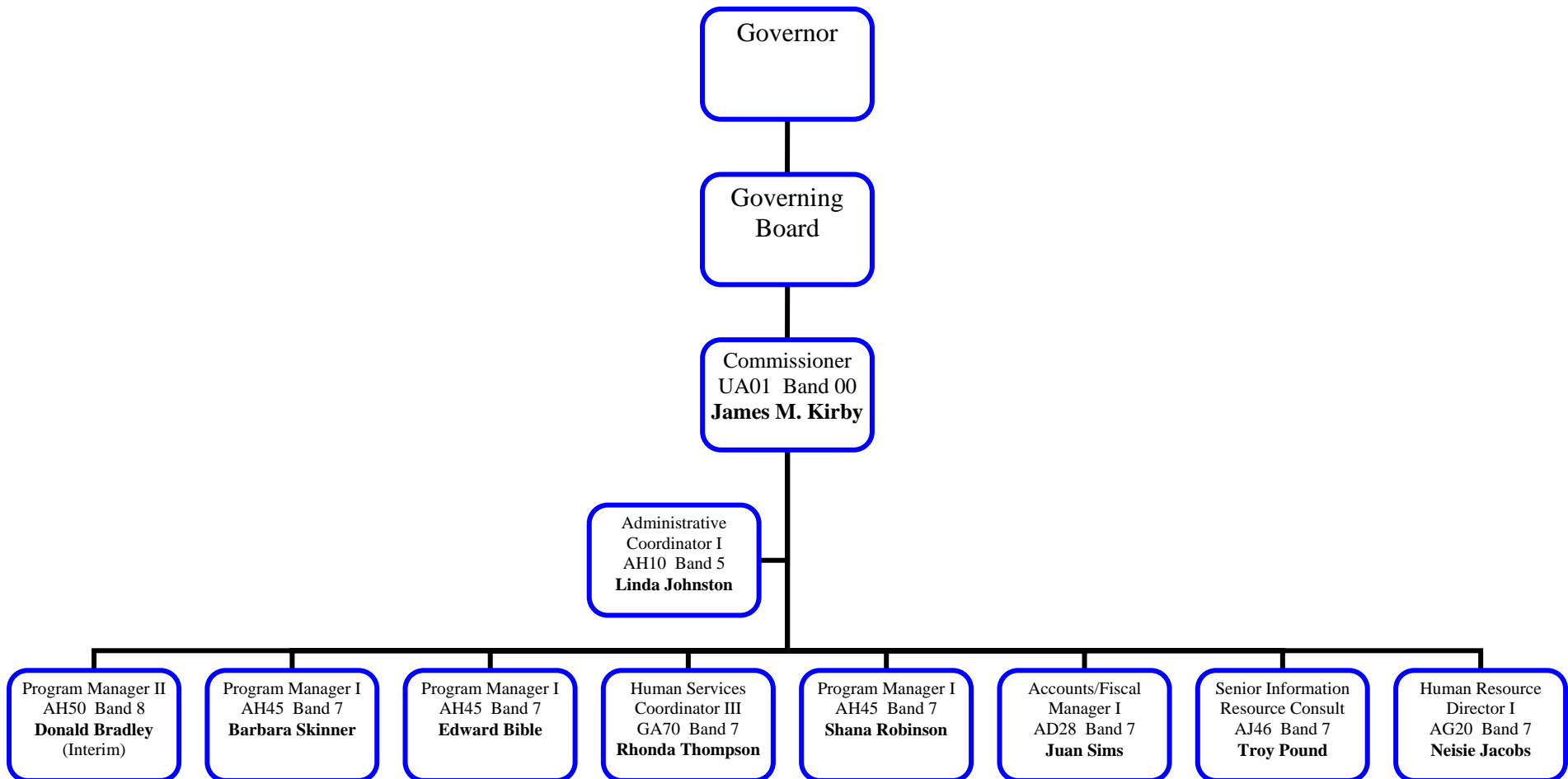
## **8. Organizational Structure**

The organizational structure of the agency begins with the appointment of a Governing Board by the Governor with Senate confirmation. The Governing Board is a policy making board which is responsible for the appointment of the Agency Commissioner who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the agency. The structure of the agency is divided into two segments: consumer services and administration. The overall organizational chart follows on chart II.2.



Figure II-2

## South Carolina Commission for the Blind Organizational Chart - Management



## **Section III: Elements of Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria**

### **Category-1: Leadership**

- 1.1** How do senior leaders set, deploy and ensure two-way communication for:  
a) short and long term direction, b) performance expectations, c) organizational values,  
d) empowerment and innovation, e) organizational and employee learning, and  
f) ethical behavior?
- 1.1a** The leadership of the organization consists of the Governing Board, the Commissioner and the Senior Management Team. The Governing Board sets policy and the Commissioner and Senior Management Team are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization. Leadership skills of the organizational leadership include: ability to communicate effectively, commitment to program goals, shared values, timely decision making, implementation of organizational policies, commitment to accountability and compassion for consumers and staff. A serious, no-nonsense approach to assuring compliance and improving programs is the current practice of the leadership of the organization.
- 1.1b** Performance expectations in the organization are established with full input of individual staff and communicated in writing in a planning document signed by both parties. The performance expectations for the total organization are set by the Board of Commissioners and communicated throughout the organization through the Strategic Management Plan.
- 1.1c** Organizational values are communicated through policy dissemination and in face-to-face meetings with staff.
- 1.1d** Staff is empowered with budgeting that allows enough funding to accomplish the performance expectations. Empowerment of staff is also the result of the creation of a work environment that encourages innovation and creativity.
- 1.1e** Leadership advances organizational learning by involving all levels of staff in development of new policies, strategic planning, budget planning and preparation and involvement in community activities. Individual learning occurs as a result of leadership communicating opportunities for improvement and by encouraging full participation in relevant/available training.
- 1.1f** The leadership of the organization sets and deploys standards of ethical behavior by serving as role models for the organization in terms of maintaining the highest ethical standards of behavior. Standards of ethical behavior are also deployed through policy issuance.

**1.2** How do senior leaders establish and promote focus on customers and other stakeholders?

Focus on customer service has been set by verbal communication from the Board of Commissioners. This same customer service focus has been further established with the mission and vision statements of the organization. The focus on customer service is maintained through evaluation of individual performance standards, strategic plan, action plans and policies.

**1.3** How do senior leaders maintain fiscal, legal and regulatory accountability?

Fiscal accountability is maintained with internal controls reviewed on a monthly basis by senior staff. The quarterly evaluation of the progress of the Strategic Management Plan also provides vital information about fiscal accountability. Additionally, annual reviews by the state auditor and the Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration provide vital information regarding fiscal accountability.

Legal accountability is maintained through consultation with the agency's attorney, the Budget and Control Board, and the Federal oversight agency. Regulatory accountability is maintained in much the same manner. The Federal oversight agency is relied upon to provide changes in Federal regulations that have an impact on the agency's service delivery systems. Similarly, various offices within the Budget and Control Board are relied upon to provide guidance on state regulations.

**1.4** What key performance measures are regularly reviewed by your senior leaders?

Key performance measures regularly reviewed for all programs include:

- Referrals
- Referrals processed
- Eligibility determinations
- Cases in active status

Other key measures regularly reviewed (some of which are program specific) include:

- Number of individuals competitively placed at or above minimum wage
- Number of individual plans of employment/service developed
- Individuals served by programs
- Number of cases in compliance with federal and state regulations and agency policy
- Consumer satisfaction
- Comparison of Blind Licensed Vendor's earnings to the state's average earnings

- 1.5** How do senior leaders use organizational performance review findings and employee feedback to improve their own leadership effectiveness and the effectiveness of management throughout the organization?

An organizational performance review of the Strategic Management Plan is used by senior leadership to determine what changes need to be made in the leadership to enhance organizational performance. Leadership asks the question: “What can the leadership do to improve organizational performance?” The answers to this question are developed into written communications in the form of procedures, policies or other directives.

- 1.6** How does the organization address the current and potential impact on the public of its products, programs, services, facilities and operations, including associated risks?

When blind or severely visually impaired individuals are placed in competitive employment, dependence on public assistance is reduced. When adequate independent living services are provided, these services often result in individuals remaining in the home instead of being placed in a nursing facility. Positive financial impact is assessed with data. The associated risks are possibility of injury of consumers while in training. Such risk is examined at the time services are planned. Overall, the services provided to consumers have a positive economic and social impact on the community.

- 1.7** How does senior leadership set and communicate key organizational priorities for improvement?

Senior leadership sets priorities for improvement through organizational performance evaluation. Improvement needs are determined by quarterly evaluations of the Strategic Management Plan. For example, if competitive placements in employment are not equal to or greater than the previous quarter, increasing placements becomes a high priority. Priorities for improvement are communicated through clear and concise policy and procedure issuances.

- 1.8** How does senior leadership actively support and strengthen the community? Include how you identify and determine areas of emphasis.

Areas of emphasis for community involvement are based on the mission of the organization, the need to collaborate with other human service initiatives, advocacy groups, vision related service groups and the expressed needs of the blind and visually impaired community. Community involvement is achieved through service on interagency committees, participation in community efforts such as United Way, Red Cross Blood Drive, Good Health Appeal, Prevention Partners, and Palmetto Health (i.e. flu shots). Collaboration with other state agencies reduces the risk of duplication of services, provides exchange of useful information and creates opportunities for joint endeavors such as grant funding. The agency also supports other community organization efforts by allowing employees to communicate and gather support from coworkers during non-work hours.

## **Category-2: Strategic Planning**

- 2.1** What is your Strategic Planning process, including KEY participants, and how does it account for:
- a. Customer Needs and Expectations
  - b. Financial, Regulatory, Societal and Other Risks
  - c. Human Resource Capabilities and Needs
  - d. Operational Capabilities and Needs
  - e. Supplies/Contractor/Partner Capabilities and Needs
- 2.1a** The strategic planning process starts with the needs of the current and prospective consumers of the agency. Meetings with consumer groups and individuals provide valuable information about customer needs. The applications for services are carefully examined to determine the greatest services needs. With an open door policy, consumers are encouraged to communicate needs and concerns to agency staff.
- 2.1b** The mandates of funding sources play a major role in the strategic planning process. For example, with more than 50% of the agency's funding coming from a federal source, risks associated with loss of the funding have to be considered. An analysis of societal and community economic impact in the strategic planning process indicated that no risk existed and that certain strategies would have a positive impact on the community.
- 2.1c** The strategic planning process includes an in-depth analysis of the existing human resources and need for additional human resources. A significant result of the analysis was an indication that the agency needed to be reorganized to strategically utilize existing human resources. The reorganization did take place, and the strategic plan was developed accordingly. The agency's capacity to provide services to customers is closely linked to the analysis of human resources since most of the services provided to customers are delivered by staff.
- 2.1d** The operational capabilities of the organization were analyzed to determine capacity. The outcome included changes in some operational policies and procedures.
- 2.1e** Suppliers and contractors were examined to determine parameters. Public and private sector employers were identified as partners, and it was determined that this pool of partners was limitless.

## 2.2 What are your key strategic objectives?

<b>Strategic Planning</b>			
<b>Program Number and Title</b>	<b>Supported Agency Strategic Planning Goal/Objective</b>	<b>Related FY 05-06 Key Agency Action Plan/Initiative(s)</b>	<b>Key Cross References for Performance Measures*</b>
II. Rehabilitation Services	Maintain the number of competitive employment outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the number of consumers served</li> <li>• Provide training that will enhance blind and visually impaired adults' ability to become more independent and employable</li> </ul>	7.1-3; 7.2-1; 7.2-3; 7.2-7; 7.2-8; 7.2-9; 7.2-10; 7.2-11
IV. Community Services	Enhance and maintain independence and quality of life in the home and in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide adjustment to blindness skills training to consumers 55 years of age and older (Older Blind Program)</li> <li>• Identify and serve blind and visually impaired children (birth to age 13) and their families (Children's Services Program)</li> </ul>	7.1-4; 7.2-4 7.1-6; 7.2-6;
III. Prevention	Prevent, stabilize or restore the loss of vision through medical services and Prevention Awareness Programs.	Provide appropriate medical services to detect eye diseases in their early stages	7.1-5; 7.2-5
I. Administration	Provide the human resources leadership, guidance and tools necessary to accomplish the mission of the agency	Develop and/or maintain the skills that are necessary for employees to accomplish the agency mission	7.4-1; 7.4-3; 7.4-4
I. Administration	Provide the administrative leadership necessary to ensure accountability, effectiveness and efficiency	Assure compliance with state and federal regulations governing programs  Maintain sound fiscal procedures and accountability levels that are acceptable by all funding sources	7.5-1; 7.5-2 7.3-1; 7.3-2; 7.3-3; 7.3-4; 7.3-5
I. Administration	To implement a comprehensive information system that encompasses the organizational knowledge, management and strategic levels	Develop a consumer tracking system that supports the agency data reporting requirements  Develop a standardized information system that reflects and supports the agency infrastructure	
* Key Cross-References are a link to Category 7 – Business Results. These references provide a Chart number that is included in the 7th section of this document.			

**2.3** How do you develop and track action plans that address your key strategic objectives?

The staff responsible for each specific service and operational area develops action plans. The action plans are reviewed and revised by the Senior Management Team. Self-tracking takes place on a quarterly basis, and results in a written report. Senior Managers review reports and discuss the agency's overall progress. When internal budgets are allocated, the progress of a particular program from the previous year is taken into consideration as well as plans for the upcoming year.

**2.4** What are your key action plans/initiatives?

See Strategic Planning Chart.

**2.5** How do you communicate and deploy your strategic objectives, action plans and performance measures?

On an annual basis, the Governing Board reviews the Strategic Management Plan and the performance measures. If the review generates any revisions, they are done before it is released to staff and implemented. The objectives, action plans and organizational performance measures are communicated throughout the agency by the Intranet system and become the basis for setting individual performance standards for all employees of the agency. Objectives, action plans and performance measures are deployed through case service standards, employer relations, policies and procedures and clear statements of agency mission and values.

**2.6** The agency's Strategic Management Plan is not available to the public. It is available through the agency's Intranet System for staff.

### **Category-3: Customer Focus**

#### **3.1 How do you determine who your customers are and what their key requirements are?**

There are between 11,000 and 14,000 individuals in South Carolina who are legally blind or severely visually impaired. Of these numbers, the agency serves approximately 40%. Not everyone who is blind or severely visually impaired wants or can benefit from the services of the agency. For example, the estimated population numbers include blind individuals who are employed and integrated into the social and economic mainstream of their communities and do not require vocational rehabilitation services in order to maintain their employment.

Consumers are determined by an eligibility criterion that varies from program to program. In the programs funded with Federal revenue, the eligibility criterion is dictated through program regulations. In state funded programs, eligibility criteria are developed by the agency. Key requirements for our consumers are determined by medical, skills, and psychological assessment and evaluation all related to blindness or loss of vision.

#### **3.2 How do you keep your listening and learning methods current with changing customer/business needs?**

All direct service delivery staff are provided training that is focused on service delivery in the specific areas relevant to the organization's programs. Certain staff also maintain contact with providers of services such as assistive technology, Braille products, current instructional methods and relevant research. Staff at all levels stay current with the literature in the field of rehabilitation for the blind and severely visually impaired. The information gathered through these activities is applied to program planning, expansion and improvement. Attendance at local, state and national conferences and workshops are encouraged and supported as resources allow.

#### **3.3 How do you use information from customers/stakeholders to keep services or programs relevant and provide for continuous improvement?**

Information from customers is analyzed and given consideration in all services planning. Various staff, including the Commissioner, attends advocacy group meetings, consumer group meetings and meet with individual customers to listen to the issues, concerns and needs. This information is shared with the decision-making teams in the organization, and it becomes part of the planning process.

#### **3.4 How do you measure customer/stakeholder satisfaction?**

Customer satisfaction is measured with consumer satisfaction surveys, random telephone inquiries and communication with consumers at all staff levels. Additionally, the increased level of referrals is used as a source of customer satisfaction.



**3.5** How do you build positive relationships with consumers and stakeholders? Indicate any key distinctions between different customer groups.

Positive relationships are built with customers through face-to-face communications. The Commissioner and other executive staff spend time with consumers. Management and staff are invited and attend consumer group conventions and conferences. The agency also coordinates participation of the agency consumers with annual camps and provides assistance with statewide camp operations if time permits. The staff responsible for providing direct services establishes rapport with the customers as part of the implementation of the service plan.

#### **Category-4: Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management**

- 4.1** How do you decide which operations, processes and systems to measure for tracking financial and operational performance?

The agency's Strategic Management Plan identifies the key measurements used by the organization to analyze performance. The primary goal is to increase the competitive employment outcomes of blind and severely visually impaired individuals in South Carolina. The established programs assisting in reaching this goal includes individualized training and development in the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center, Training and Employment Division, Business Enterprise Program training and the Tele-Communications Call Center. Each of these areas tracks internal referrals from the counselor. There is also follow-up from each division to identify the benefits and obstacles during the training. Additionally, during the training period there is on-going follow-up to make any needed adjustments. Information is evaluated to identify any necessary adjustments in the curricula. Each of these departments reports data concerning activity on a quarterly basis.

- 4.2** What are your key measures?

The agency's key measures for all consumer programs include referrals, referrals processed, determination of eligibility for service and active status consumers. Other measures which may be program specific include:

- Number of individuals competitively placed at or above minimum wage
- Number of individuals plans of employment/service developed
- Individuals served by programs
- Number of cases in compliance with federal, state and agency guidelines
- Customer satisfaction
- Comparison of Blind Licensed Vendor earnings to the state's average earnings

- 4.3** How do you ensure data integrity, timeliness, accuracy, security and availability for decision making?

The agency's Information Technology department ensures quality services by internally maintaining and providing accessible and timely information. Data integrity is achieved through established multi-level checks and balances by individuals, cross-references with other access points, and reports identified for data validation. Through the agency's embrace of technology, access to information and cohorts is dramatically increased through communicative and collaborative elements such as electronic mail, the Internet, and a Client Information System which allow prompt and informed decision making initiatives to occur. Annually, and as needed, database reporting systems requirements are updated and validated for integrity and accuracy. An open communication continuum exists between management in agency programs and the Information Technology Department.

This process provides managers with information on how the system is used by staff, provides a current overview of service delivery, and provides performance/production statistics. The information is also used for completing required Federal reports. Cross-functional planning, system backups, proactive efforts, and a stable, controlled operating environment have provided 99.49% system availability.

**4.4** How do you use data/information analysis to provide effective support for decision making?

The Senior Managers report quarterly on activity concerning the Strategic Management Plan. The data encompasses number of referrals, number of referrals processed and number determined to be eligible for the Vocational Rehabilitation, Older Blind, Prevention and Children Services Programs. The number of Individualized Plans for Employment is tracked for Vocational Rehabilitation and the Individualized Service Plans or Family Service Plans is tracked for the Children Services Program. The Business Enterprise Program tracks the number of blind licensed vendors and the amount of money generated from the vending stands. The average earnings of the licensed vendors are compared to the average earnings for South Carolinians. The earnings information assists in evaluating the training program offered and implementing any modifications to assist the vendors to be more successful business people.

This ongoing monitoring assists in evaluation of services to the consumers. The quarterly review by Senior Managers can assist in detecting any potential problems. For example, if the number of Individualized Plans for Employment is consistently down, there is a potential that services are not being provided efficiently to the consumers. All of the statistics play a major role in developing case closures with a successful outcome. A case is determined to be successfully closed after 90 days of employment. The Quality Assurance Department reviews cases to determine consistency of services provided throughout the state in addition to ensuring that the federal regulations are being followed in accordance to the rules and regulations of the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A sample of each counselor's cases is reviewed on a monthly basis. The data obtained assists in determining training needs, policy directive and proper application of policy and regulation. Senior Managers use the information generated from Quality Assurance to facilitate improvements needed for service delivery.

The Client Information System provides detailed data on cases as they progress through the system from applicant to closure. There are assigned status numbers which indicate the stage of the cases. For example, status 02 indicates applicant status, status 10 certified eligible, status 18 training and status 26 successfully rehabilitated. Senior Managers and the counselors from each department review the data produced from the Client Information System at least monthly to ensure that each case is in the appropriate status within the established timeframe.

**4.5** How do you select and use comparative data and information?

The Vocational Rehabilitation Department is audited on standards set through the Rehabilitation Services Administration. These goals are incorporated into the agency goals for referrals and placements. The wages of placements are compared against state averages. The agency also uses audit guidelines for comparative data such as processing time for financial information and Equal Employment Opportunity standings.

**4.6** How do you manage organizational knowledge to accomplish the collection, transfer and maintenance of accumulated employee knowledge and identification and sharing of best practices?

The agency has developed or is working on developing procedure manuals to cover procedures and tasks. This should ensure consistency as well as a road map of how tasks and projects are accomplished. The agency also monitors the number of employees on the TERI program as well as those who are retirement eligible. Additionally, the agency uses cross-training as a tool to ensure tasks can be accomplished as the workforce changes.

## **Category 5- Human Resource Focus**

### **5.1 How do you and your managers/supervisors encourage and motivate employees (formally and/or informally) to develop and utilize their full potential?**

Senior Managers and supervisors have taken a more active role in explaining how an employee's position affects the overall mission of the agency. Employees have a better feel of their contribution to the overall operation of the agency if their individual contribution is linked to the big picture. As a small agency, the opportunity for cross training and involvement with all levels of employees and projects is greater. Managers use the team approach and cross train employees on different components of the operation of their department. This is a win-win approach in which the agency benefits from more staff being trained to handle more tasks and the employees are afforded the opportunity to develop additional experience and skills. Although Managers seek out pertinent training for their staff to assist them with their current job functions, employees are also encouraged to submit training requests. The agency recognizes employees for meeting or exceeding goals during Public Service Recognition Week. Service awards are also presented to staff during the agency's annual staff meeting.

### **5.2 How do you evaluate and improve your organization's human resource related process?**

A primary evaluation and improvement method used is feedback from agency employees and primary suppliers of agency services such as the Retirement System, the Budget & Control Board, and the Office of Human Resources. Methods of improvement of the human resources process include ensuring that employees understand the agency's human resource policies and procedures for compliance with state and federal regulations as it relates to the following agency objectives: improving the agency's Equal Employment Opportunity goals percentage of underutilized categories and developing and/or maintaining employees' skills necessary to accomplish the agency's mission.

### **5.3 How do you identify and address key developmental and training needs, including job skills training, performance excellence training, diversity training, management/leadership development, new employee orientation and safety training? How do you evaluate the effectiveness of this education and training? How do you encourage on the job use of the new knowledge and skills?**

The assessment of training needs from an individual as well as an organizational perspective is handled in partnership with Human Resources and Senior Managers. Additionally, the agency reviews workers compensation cases as well as workforce planning statistics to assess training and development needs. A needs assessment was initiated to help identify staff training needs. This included a review of previous needs assessments conducted, prior training sessions held, training evaluation forms, position descriptions and employee performance appraisals. As a result of this process, courses were developed or identified to meet the agency and employee needs. The training sessions were either job specific or group training determined through noted deficiencies in performance or updates for particular areas.

New employee orientation is handled one on one as employees are hired. A review of the agency policies as well as benefits is conducted. Each department continues the orientation on the job within the department or unit. Evaluations are done on each training session held to solicit feedback on the presentation and benefits in addition to other training needs and requests. The Training and Development Coordinator works closely with Senior Managers and staff to more specifically assess training needs both from an individual and organizational perspective. The effectiveness of training and education is evaluated by feedback from Senior Managers, supervisors and employees.

**5.4** How does your Employee Performance Management System, including feedback to and from employees, support high performance and contribute to the achievement of your action plans?

It is acknowledged that quality employees are a valuable asset. Based on this recognition, it is the agency's intent to attract, enrich and retain competent, motivated, productive and efficient employees by encouraging continued growth and development. Each employee has an important role in providing such services. Therefore, it is essential that every employee understand the responsibilities of his/her job and be given an on-going, objective, constructive evaluation of their performance. The Employee Performance Management System is used as an effective management tool for communicating duties, evaluating performance and encouraging improvement. It has a dramatic impact on the overall quality of services provided. It allows two way communications between supervisors and employees in the support of high performance which contributes to the achievement of action plans that were established in the agency's Strategic Management Plan.

**5.5** How do you motivate your employees to develop and utilize their full potential?

Senior Managers and supervisors have taken an active role in explaining to each employee how their position affects the overall mission of the agency. Employees have a better feel of their contribution to the overall operation of the agency if their individual contribution is linked to the big picture. Employees are provided with opportunities for advancement when possible. In such instances, the most appropriate candidate is selected for the position. Counselors are provided with an opportunity to obtain their Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling through an agreement with USC. The agency also ensures a safe and healthy work environment, establishes clear performance and behavior goals and provides training opportunities for all employees relative to their employment needs.

**5.6** What formal and/or informal assessment methods and measures do you use to determine employee well being, satisfaction, and motivation?

Senior Managers meet regularly with employees to keep them abreast of what is going on in the agency. The agency uses the intra-agency e-mail system on a regular basis to keep information current. Senior Managers practice an open door policy so employees can feel free to ask questions or express concerns. On an annual basis, an employee staff meeting is held to address the accomplishments and issues of the agency and employees. Exit interviews are held with employees who decide to leave the agency. The information received from the interviews is evaluated in order to make improvements within the agency. Also, the Employee Performance Management System is used to facilitate positive communications between the employee, the rating supervisor and the reviewer. This includes encouragement for continued growth and development.

**5.7** How do you maintain a safe, secure, and healthy work environment? (Include your workplace preparedness for emergencies and disasters.)

The Facilities Management Unit is responsible for the administration of the safety and health issues concerning the agency. The agency's Emergency Action Plan is reviewed annually and updated accordingly. The agency's main facility has a lock system in which employees are assigned an entry card for access to the building. The district offices are located in facilities in which visitors come to a main entrance before visiting any staff. The Facilities Management Unit works closely with other state agencies such as the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation and Construction and Planning of the Budget and Control Board in order to maintain current information with regards to compliance with safety regulations.

## **Category 6-Process Management**

- 6.1 What are your key processes that produce, create or add value for your customers and your organization, and how do they contribute to success?

Key Delivery Processes:

- Determination of Eligibility
- Development of Individualized Plans of Employment or Service
- Provision of Training
- Consumers Placed in Competitive Employment

In every phase of the rehabilitation process, the Counselor is the key person in making the provision of services to the consumers. The consumer is a collaborating partner with the development, implementation and evaluation of the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE). Opportunity is given to exercise informed choice in the selection of the employment goal, service providers and procurement methods on the IPE. Greater emphasis is placed on the fact that services must be provided in the most integrated setting that is both appropriate to the service being provided and reflects the informed choice of the individual. An IPE is amended only when substantive changes in the employment goal, services provided or in service providers are evident. Once determining the specific training the consumer needs as it relates to the vocational objective, the Counselor completes a referral packet and submits it to the appropriate training program. The training programs include the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center, Training and Employment Division, Business Enterprise Program, and the Telecommunications Call Center. The Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center curriculum includes Orientation and Mobility, GED Preparatory, Braille Literacy, Home and Personal Management and Communications. In the Training and Employment Division, curriculum includes Braille Terminals, Speech Software, Magnification Software, Closed Circuit Television, Scanners/Reading Software and Notetakers. Specific training within each training program is also determined based on the need of the consumer. Once the consumer is admitted for training, the staff makes additional assessments as appropriate. During the assessment phase or training, there may be a determination of additional training needs. These needs are referred to the Counselor who then makes additional referrals as deemed appropriate. Reports detailing the consumer's progress are provided to the Counselor. Once training and all other services have been provided, the Counselor can begin developing potential job opportunities for the consumer. Employment Consultants are available to Counselors for job placement assistance as needed.



- 6.2** How do you incorporate organizational knowledge, new technology, changing customer and mission-related requirements, cost controls and other efficiency and effectiveness factors into process design and delivery?

The Counselors utilize the Client Information System to assist them in managing a consumer's caseload. There has been an increased emphasis on the use of the system as a management tool. The system provides status reports that assist the Counselors and Senior Managers in monitoring the progress of meeting performance measures. The agency is also responsible for conducting inventories on vendor stands during the year. A bar coding system has been implemented to assist with this process. The new system assists with the accuracy and speed of the inventories. Both of these systems also serve as documentation tools and techniques in transferring pertinent information necessary in serving the agency's consumers.

- 6.3** How does your day-to-day operation of these processes ensure meeting key performance requirements?

There are established standards in regard to managing a caseload, which include determining eligibility within 60 days of application and developing an individualized Plan for Employment within 60 days of determining eligibility. Although standard curriculum and completion time vary among departments, the time of completion for the provision of services can be modified based on the consumer's need and progress. Quality Assurance performs case reviews to assess the progress of the Counselor's activities on each consumer's case. To assist with meeting service and training goals, the agency has an established Transportation Unit. Transportation drivers are located throughout the state to provide this service. If the agency's Transportation Unit cannot provide the service as scheduled, the Counselor makes arrangements through local transportation systems or consumer family or friends. The Counselor makes purchase requisitions to provide goods or services (i.e. medical) for the consumer. The Procurement Department has established timeframes on processing and providing approval within 5 days of receipt.

- 6.4** What are your key support processes, and how do you improve and update these processes to achieve better performance?

- Information Technology
- Finance
- Human Resources

Administrative support processes related to key service include the Information Technology Department, Finance and Human Resources. The Information Technology Department is responsible for administering and maintaining the Client Information System.

The Senior Management as well as all consumer service staff have access to the reports generated from the Client Information System and can access them when needed. Training on the use and importance of the data inputted into the Client Information System has been provided to all consumer service staff. The Finance Department provides monthly reports of the financial status of all departments. Consumer services staff can manage and budget their funds while making decisions on services provided. Finance works closely with the Senior Managers in making sure that staff do not exceed their allotted budget allocation. Human Resources works with the Chief of Consumer Services and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors on meeting the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development requirement of obtaining a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling - which is a national standard. Additionally, the recruitment process for personnel vacancies are handled as expeditiously as possible so as to ensure there is a minimal delay in the provision of services.

**6.5** How do you manage and support your key supplier/contractor/partner interactions and processes to improve performance?

Employers are a key supplier of employment opportunities for the agency's consumers. Counselors and Employment Consultants maintain direct contact with potential employers on a continual basis. The agency partners with the employers by assisting them with establishing worksites for the employees who are blind and visually impaired. The agency offers the knowledge and access to tools and equipment for the blind and visually impaired to work efficiently. The agency also continues to serve as a technical resource for employers when issues arise concerning blind or visually impaired staff that could jeopardize employment. These services not only provide employment opportunities for the agency's consumers but assists employers with meeting the American with Disability Act requirements. In addition to working with employers, Counselors are also responsible for maintaining contact with physicians in their territories to explain the comprehensive services the agency offers. A significant portion of the referrals to the agency is received from doctors.

## Category-7: Business Results

### 7.1 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of customer satisfaction?

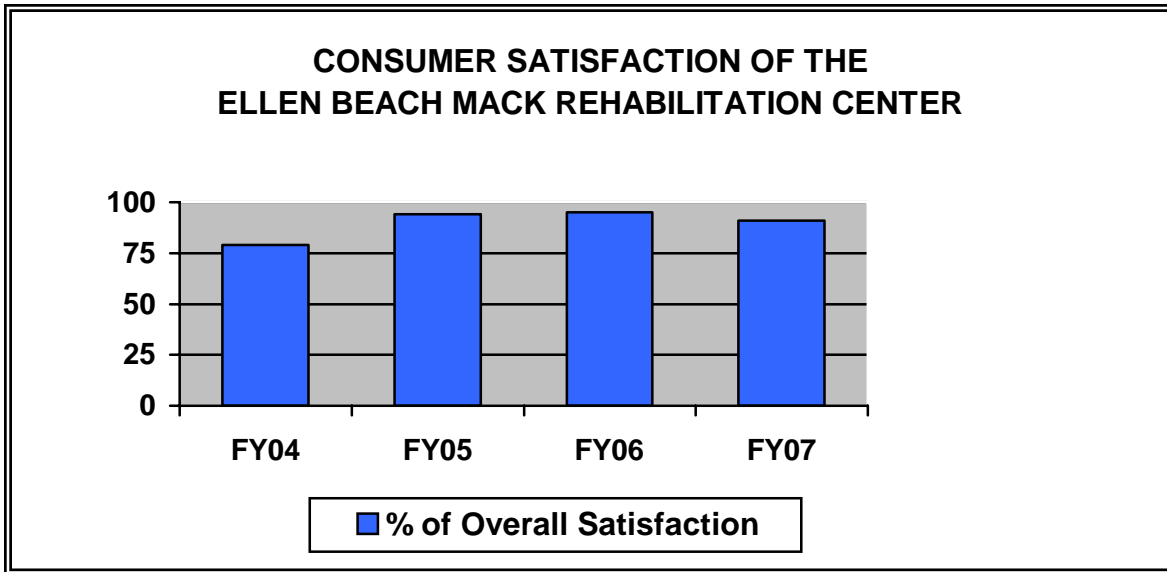


Figure 7.1-1

In FY 2007, there was a slight decline in the overall consumer satisfaction rate. The most common reason for consumer dissatisfaction was that the dormitory accommodations did not meet expectations. Renovations to the dormitories are currently being made in order to resolve this concern.

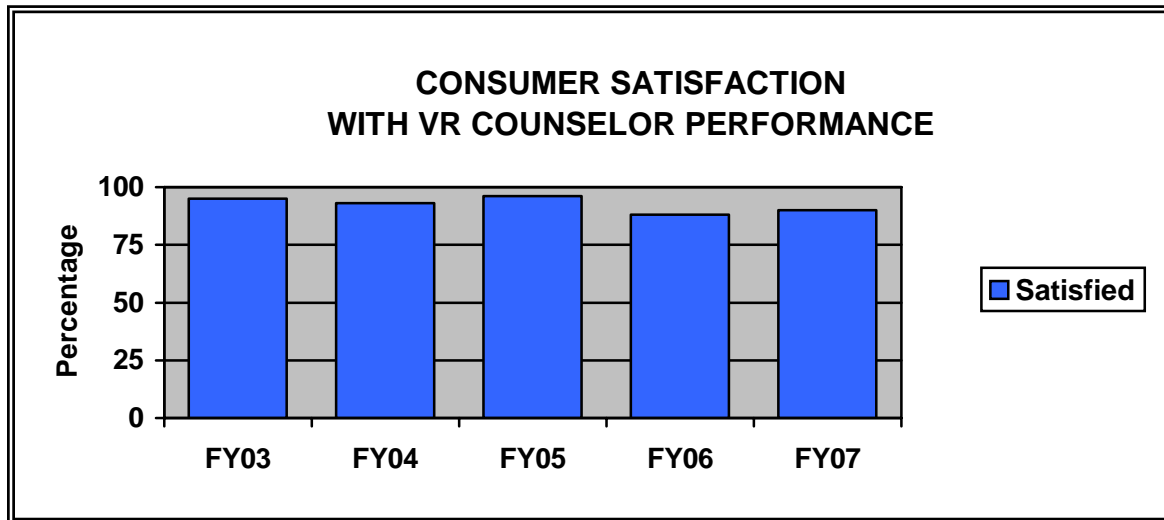
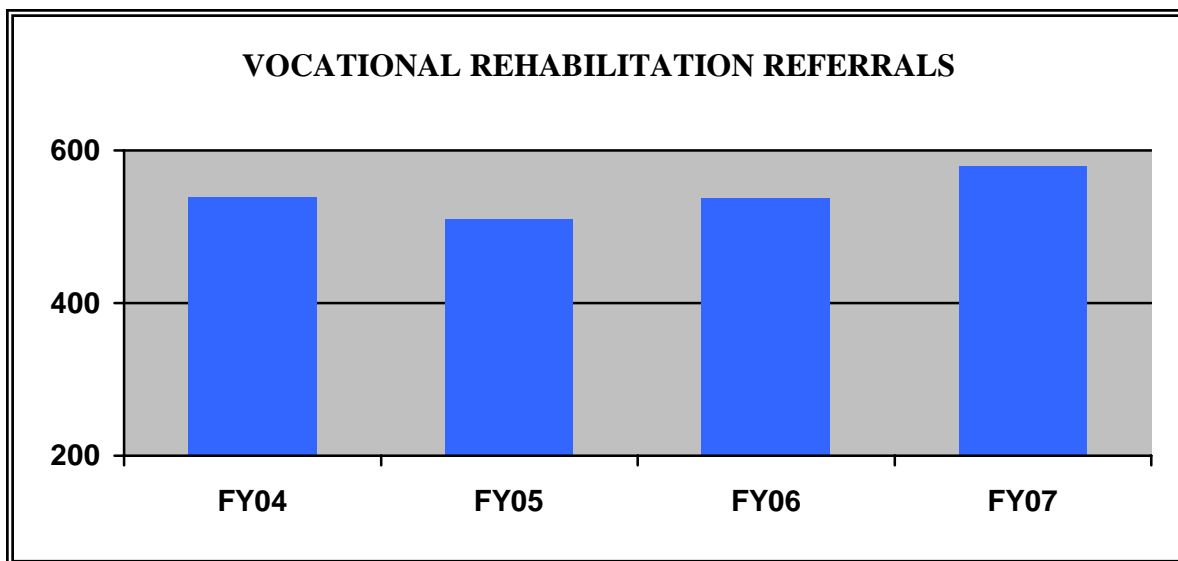


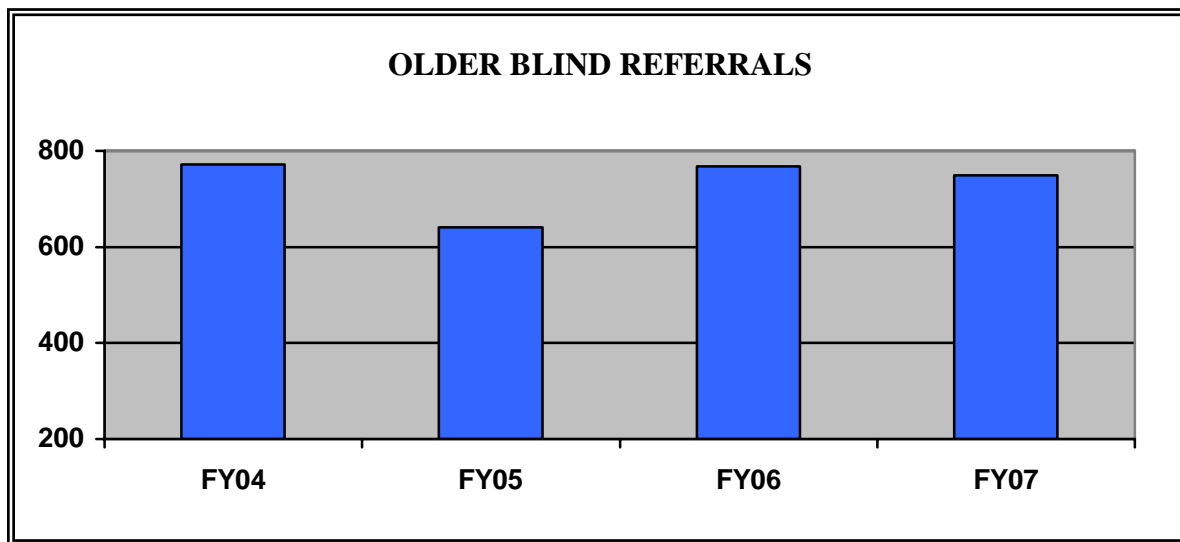
Figure 7.1-2

There was a slight increase in the level of consumer satisfaction compared to FY 2006. Efforts to continually improve consumer satisfaction in the future will include counselor training in VR case management techniques, focus on effective communication with consumers and techniques on the delivery of efficient and quality customer service.



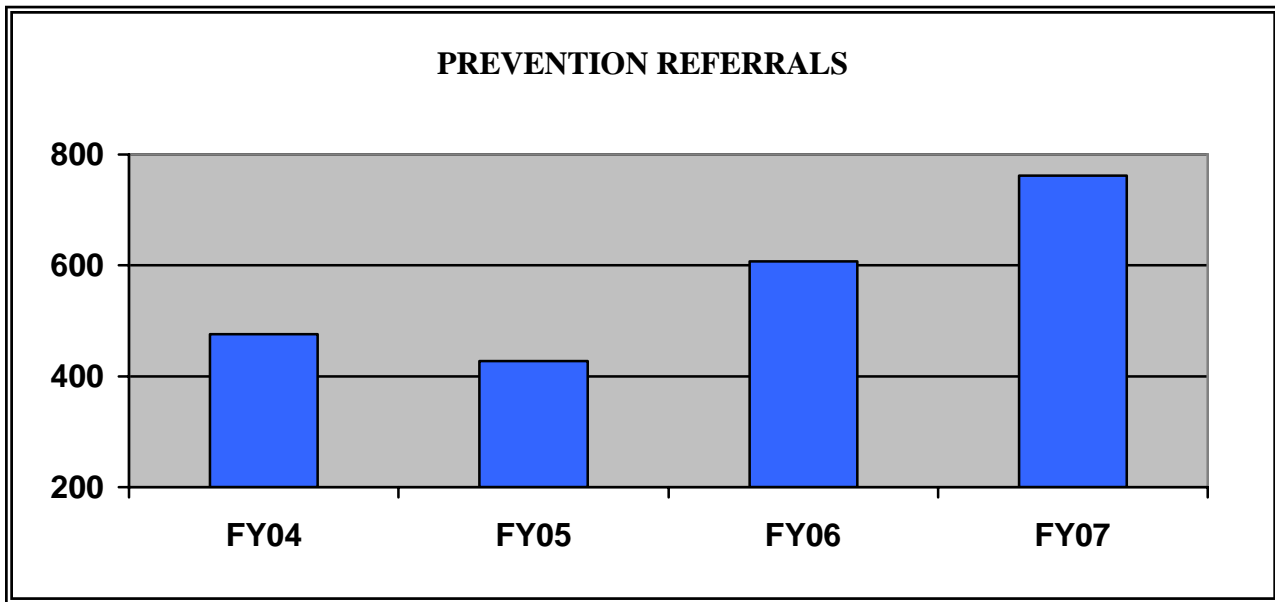
**Figure 7.1-3**

In FY 2007, referrals to the VR Program increased by 8% compared to FY 2006. This increase is attributed to the efforts of the VR Counselors to focus on the unserved populations in the rural counties of South Carolina.



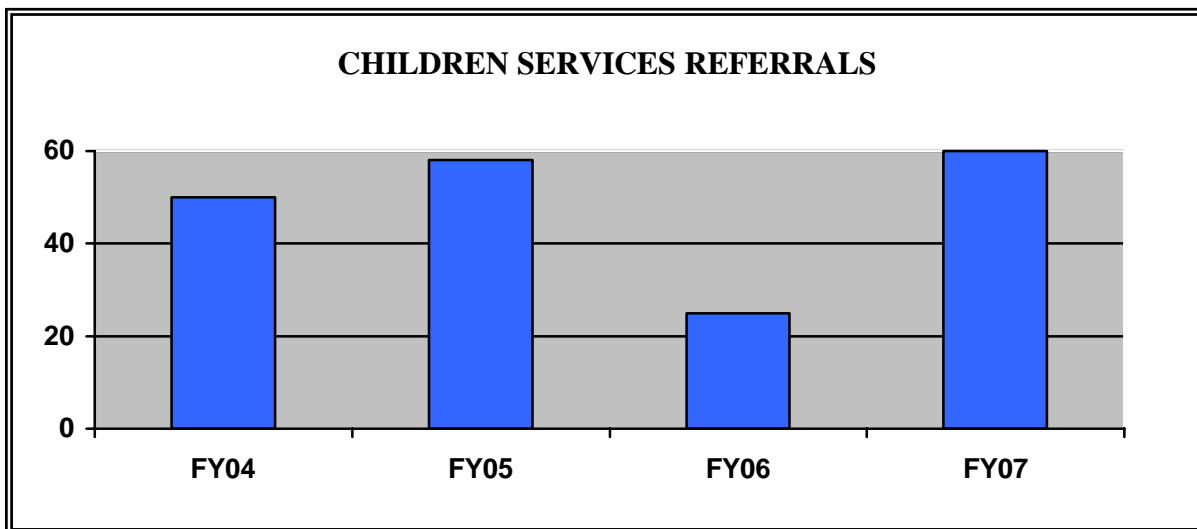
**Figure 7.1-4**

Although there was a slight decrease in the number of referrals received in FY 2007 compared to last fiscal year, the provision of comprehensive, one-on-one independent living services increased due to the expansion of services to include assistive technology and computer training and vision screening programs.



**Figure 7.1-5**

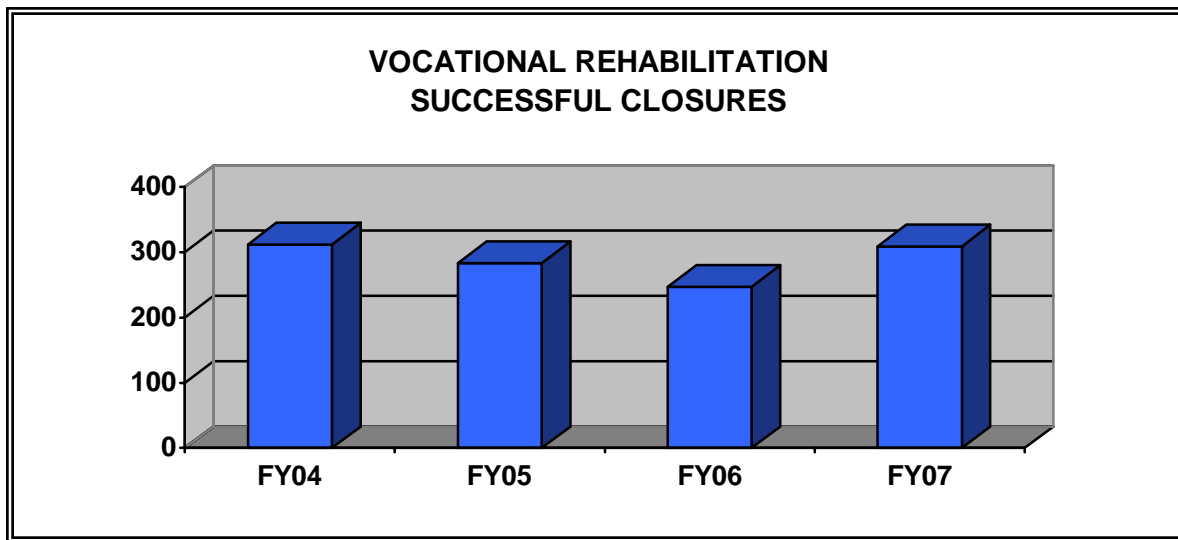
In FY 2007, there was a 25% increase in the number of referrals compared to FY 2006. The increase in the number of referrals can be attributed to the rising cost of medical services and treatments as well as an increase in the number of individuals who cannot afford health insurance.



**Figure 7.1-6**

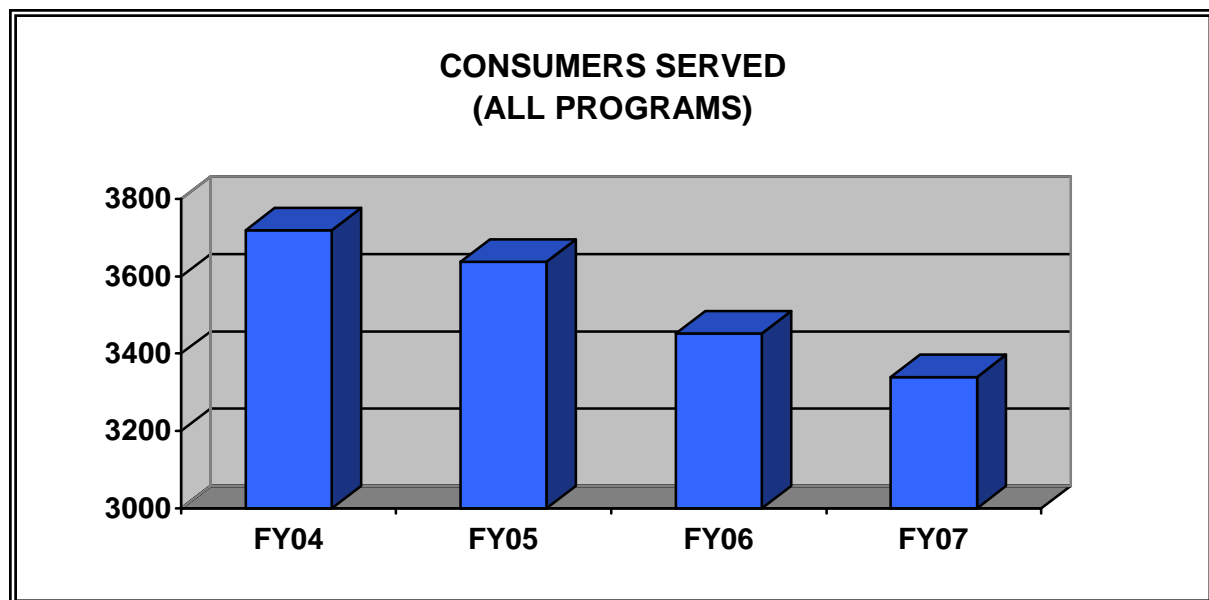
In FY 2007, there was a substantial increase in the number of referrals received by the Children's Services Program. This increase was attributed to the addition of a new Children's Services Counselor as well as a redistribution of counties.

**7.2. What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of mission accomplishment and organizational effectiveness?**



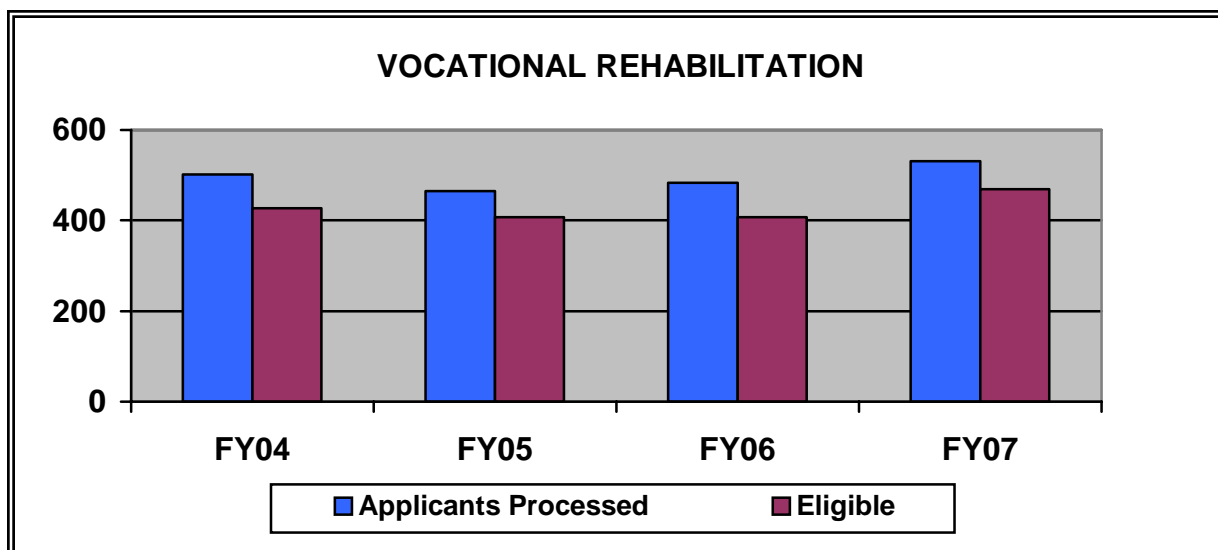
**Figure 7.2-1**

In FY 2007, there was a 25% increase in the number of successful rehabilitants compared to last fiscal year. Emphasis on targeting underserved rural counties, reorganizing the VR counseling staff and redistributing the counties are all factors which contributed to the increase in the number of successful rehabilitants.



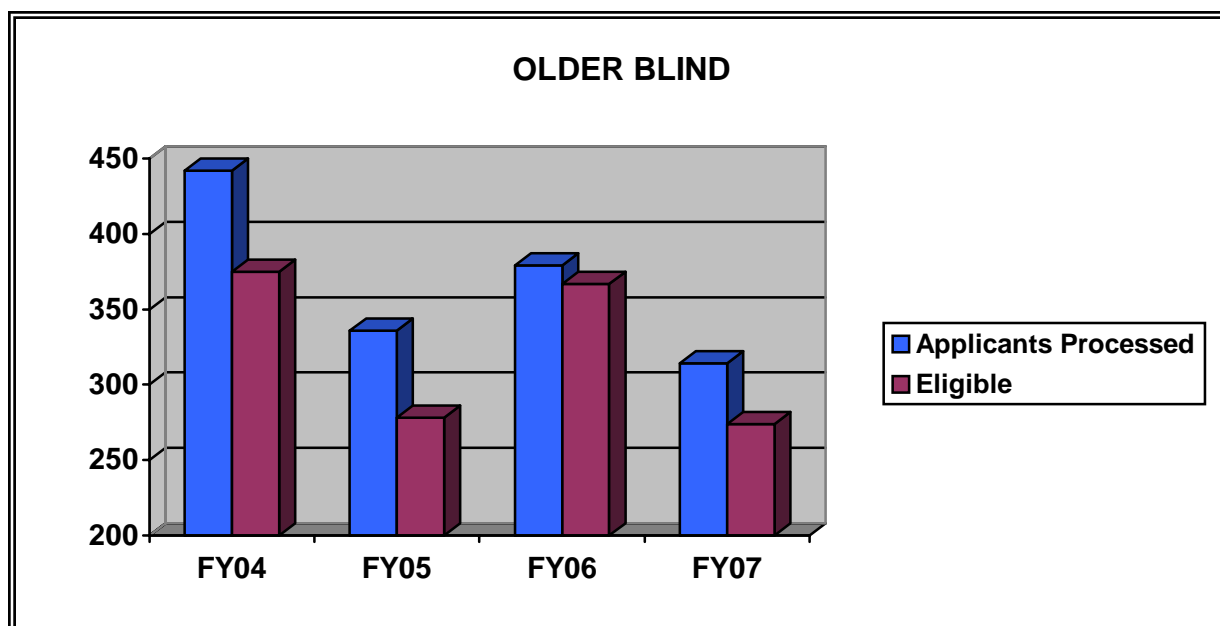
**Figure 7.2-2**

The decrease in the total number of consumers served in FY 2007 was attributed to the need for counselors to increase the provision of comprehensive services related to training in adjustment to blindness, home management, orientation and mobility and adaptive equipment and software.



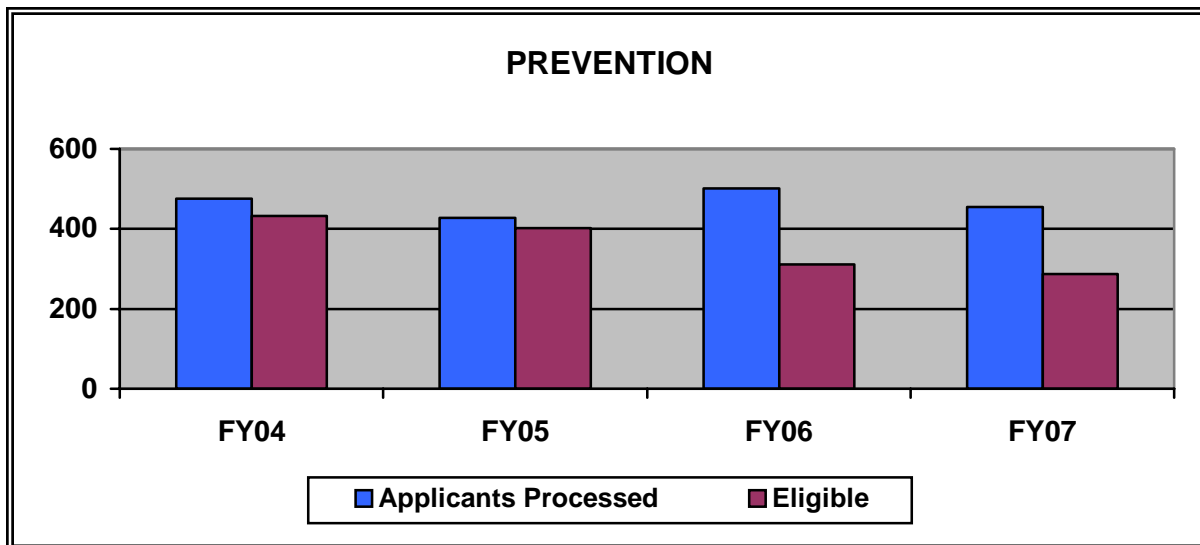
**Figure 7.2-3**

In FY 2007, there was a 9% increase in the number of applicants processed and a 15% increase in the number of consumers certified eligible. Targeting underserved rural counties and reorganizing the VR counseling staff were significant factors which contributed to these increases.



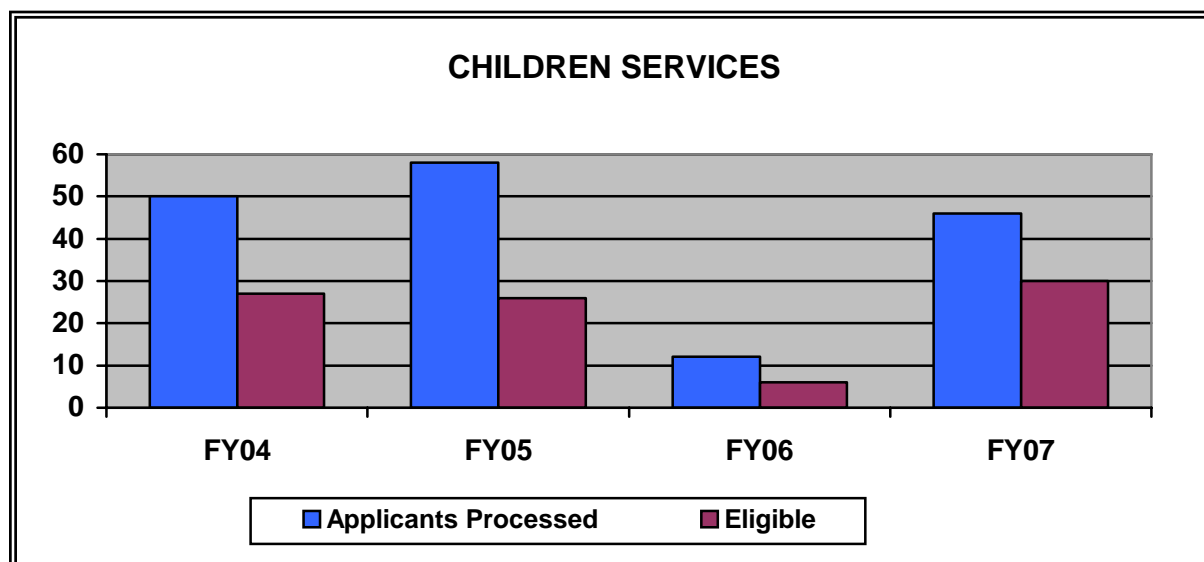
**Figure 7.2-4**

In FY 2007, the consumer to counselor ratio increased significantly due to the loss of one counselor. Additionally, the expansion of independent living services to include training on adaptive equipment and software for active consumers increased. As a result of the expansion of services, the average dollar amount spent per consumer significantly increased as indicated in Figure 7.3-2.



**Figure 7.2-5**

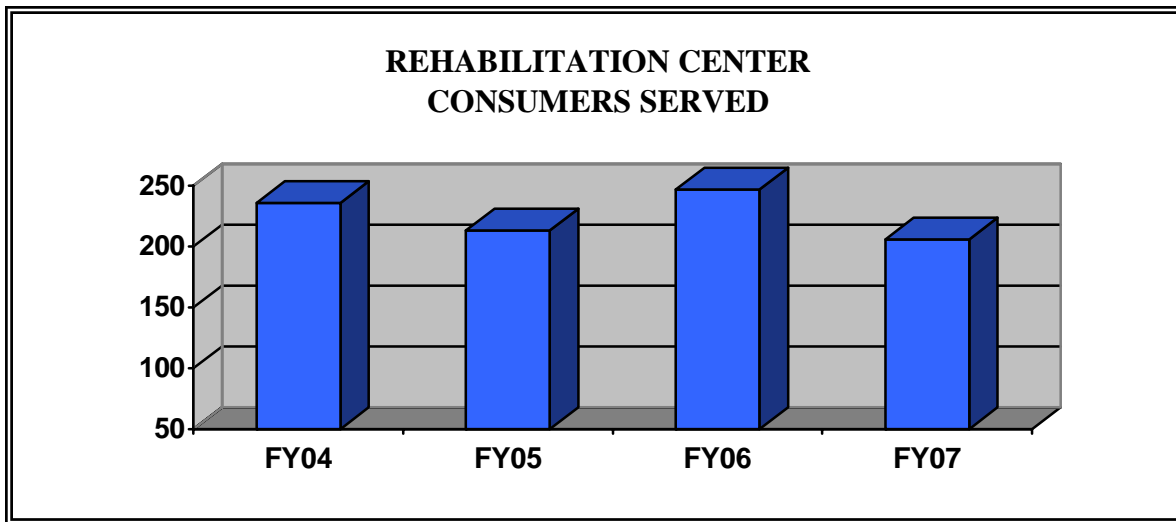
In FY 2007, the decrease in the number of applicants processed and the number of consumers certified eligible was attributed to the decrease in the number of Prevention Counselors statewide. As a result, a significant disproportion in consumer to counselor ratio occurred, thereby creating the need to place the primary focus of service provision on active consumers.



**Figure 7.2-6**

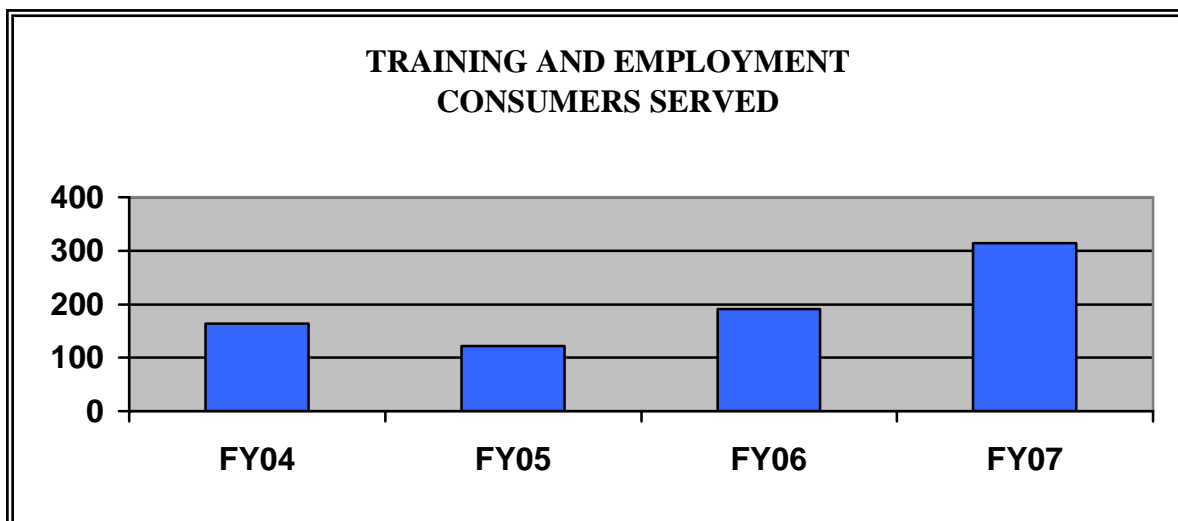
In FY 2007, the substantial increase in the number of applicants processed and certified eligible was attributed to the addition of a new Children's Services Counselor.





**Figure 7.2-7**

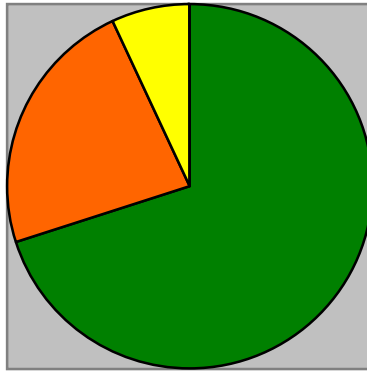
In FY 2007, the decrease in the number of consumers served at the EBMRC was attributed to the shortage of Orientation and Mobility Instructors. As a result of this shortage of staff, consumers who had already been admitted to the EBMRC had to be placed on a waiting list to receive O&M training. The waiting list of current consumers necessitated the delay of admission for other consumers, thereby adversely affecting the total number of consumers who could be served.



**Figure 7.2-8**

The increase in the number of consumers served in FY 2007 was attributed to an increase in referrals from VR and Older Blind Counselors, an increase in referrals from the Charleston area as a result of a partnership with the Association for the Blind and an increased need to provide technical assistance to consumers who were recipients of corporate computer donations.

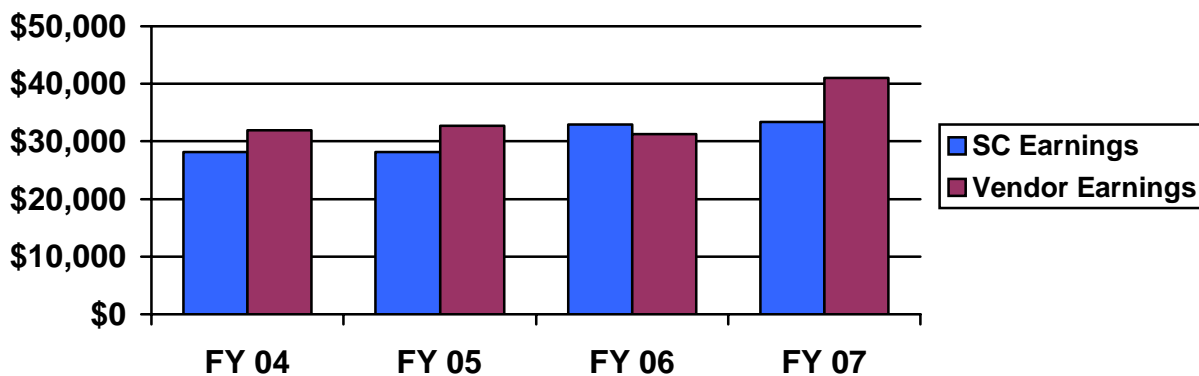
### TELECOMMUNICATIONS CALL CENTER CONSUMERS SERVED



**Figure 7.2-9**

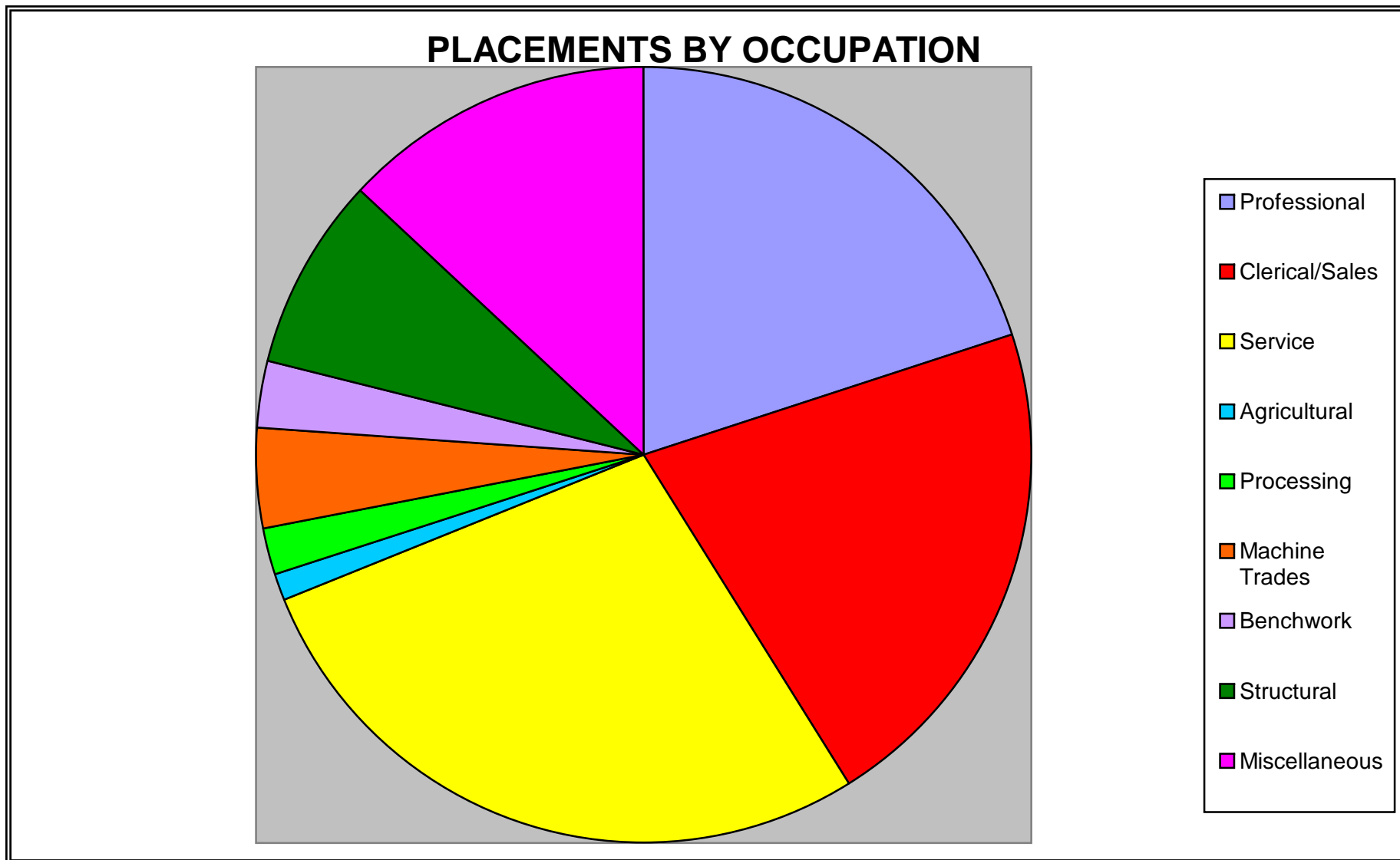
The chart reflects the percentage of consumers who received Call Center training. While the primary focus was training the blind and visually impaired, consumers with other disabilities from out of state and the general vocational rehabilitation agency received training in customer service as well.

### BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM SC Average Earnings vs Blind Vendor Average Earnings



**Figure 7.2-10**

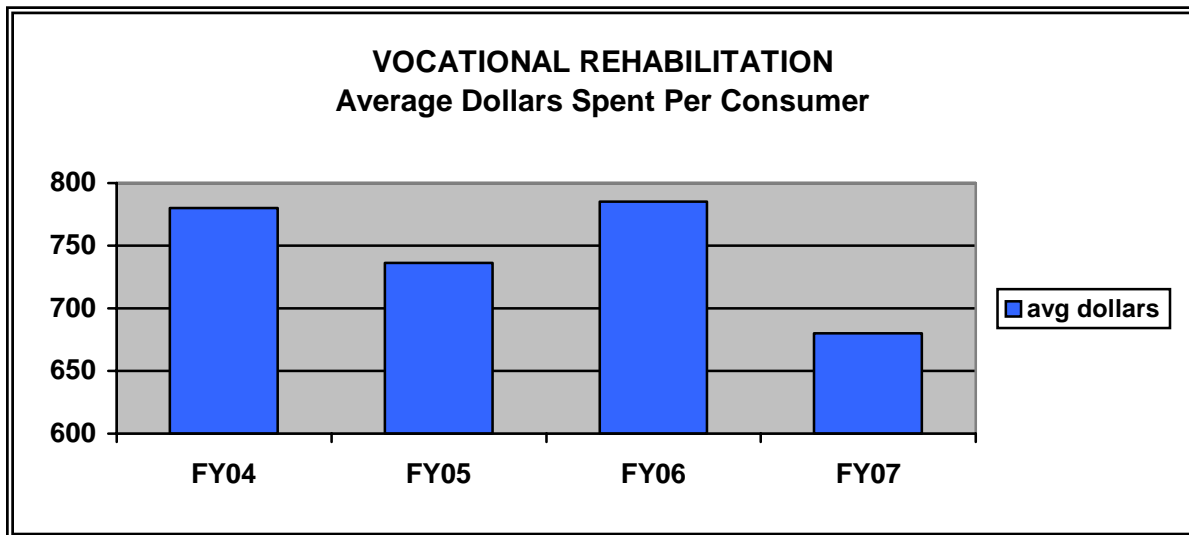
BEP vendor earnings in FY 2007 increased by 31% compared to BEP vendor earnings in FY 2006. Additionally, BEP vendor earnings were 22% higher than the South Carolina average earnings in FY 2007.



**Figure 7.2-11**

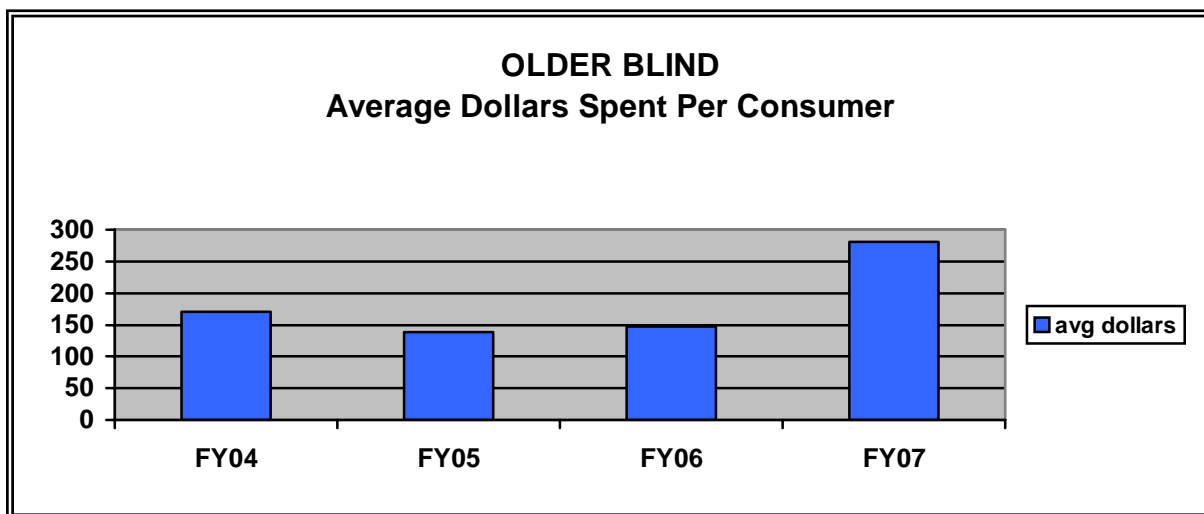
In FY 2007, the majority of the competitive employment placements were in the service, clerical/sales and professional industries. These employment trends have been consistent since FY 2004. The consistency of these employment trends demonstrates the willingness of employers to continually hire or retain blind and visually impaired individuals, thereby contributing to the improvement of their quality of life and economic independence.

### 7.3. What are your performance levels and trends of financial performance?



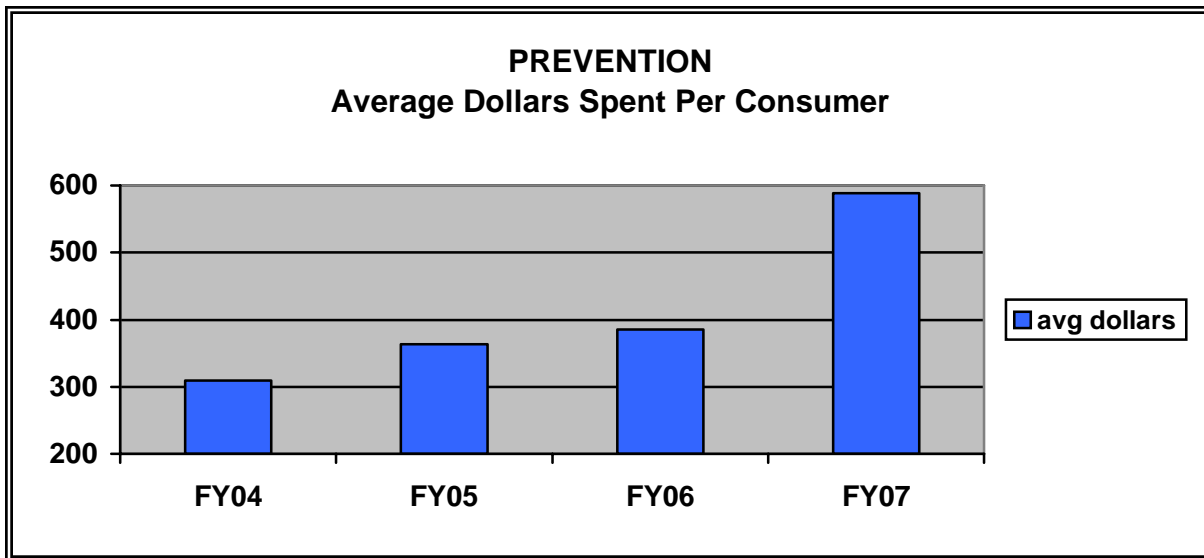
**Figure 7.3-1**

In FY 2007, the average dollar spent per consumer decreased due to the utilization of comparable benefits (i.e. use of disability or private medical insurance, scholarships and grants for tuition assistance, etc.) to purchase VR services.



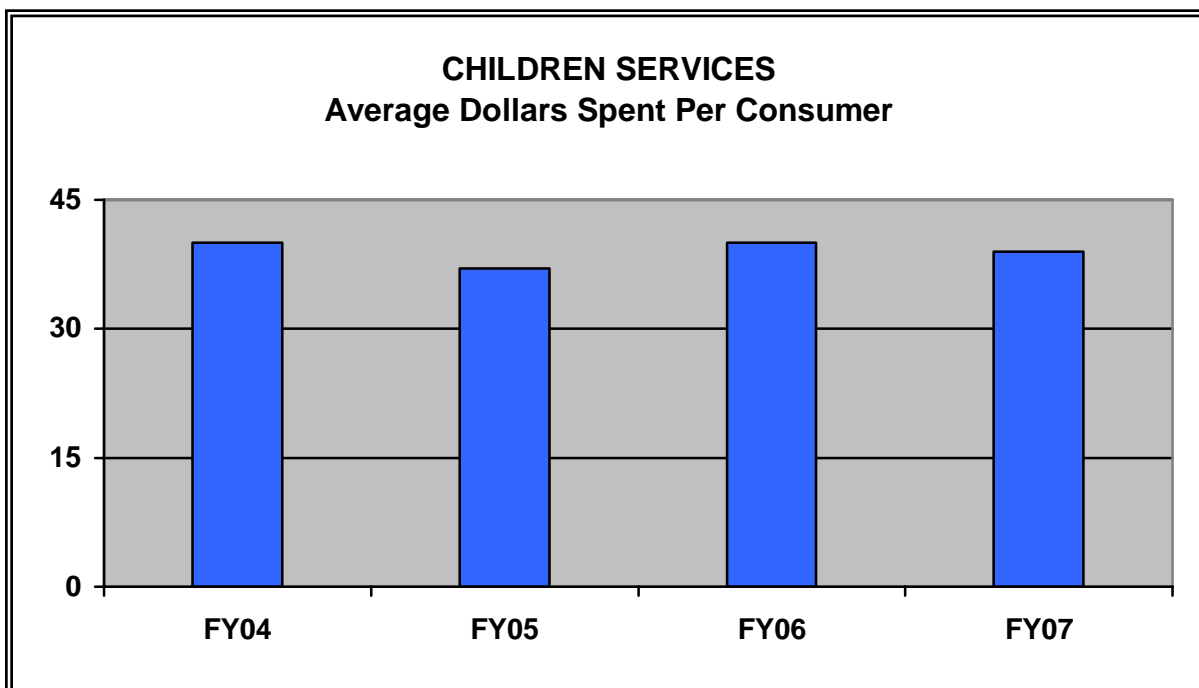
**Figure 7.3-2**

The increase in the average dollar spent per consumer was attributed to the expansion of services to include adaptive equipment and software as well as consistent increases in medical expenses associated with the elderly.



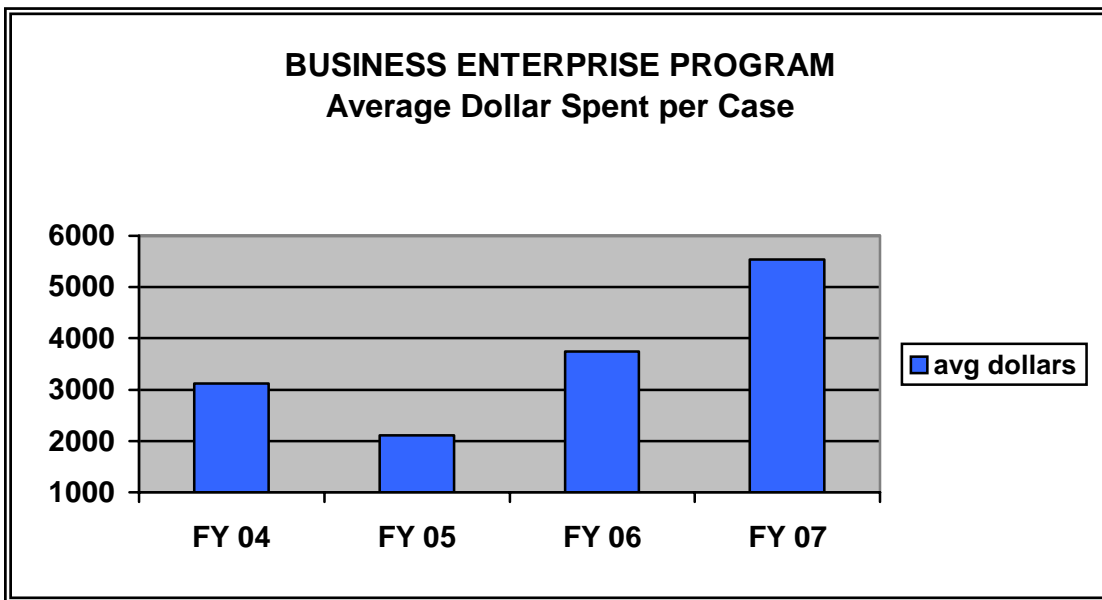
**Figure 7.3 3**

In FY 2007, the substantial increase in the amount spent per consumer in the Prevention of Blindness Program was attributed to the rising cost of medical services as well as an increased number of consumers who could not afford medical insurance.



**Figure 7.3 4**

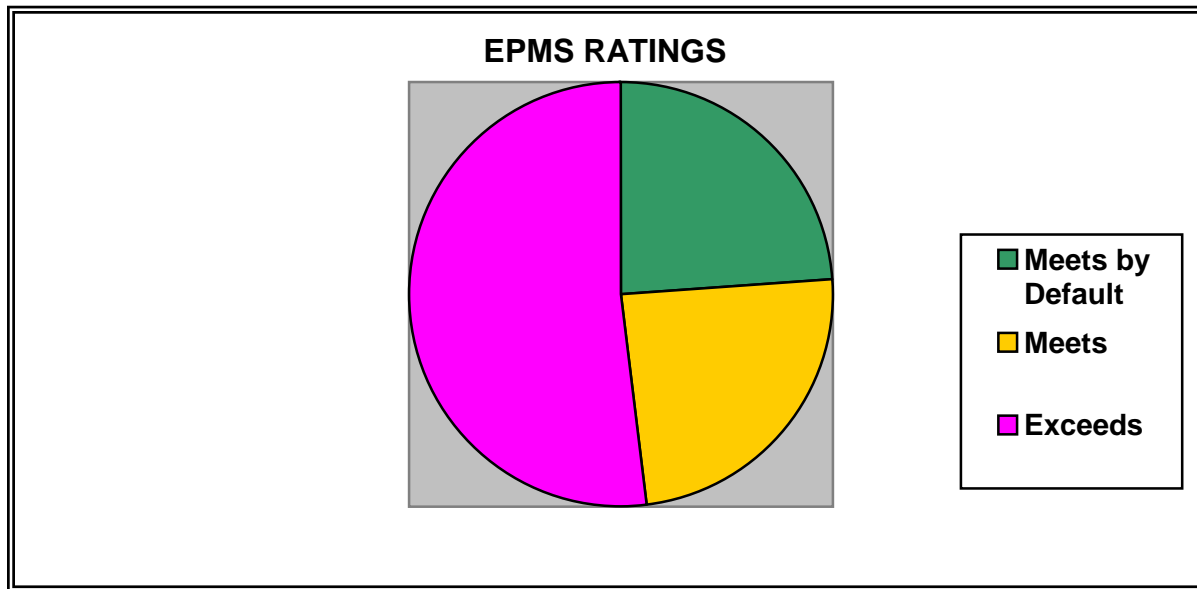
In FY 2007, the average dollar amount spent per consumer in the Children's Services Program remained consistent compared to previous fiscal years.



**Figure 7.3 5**

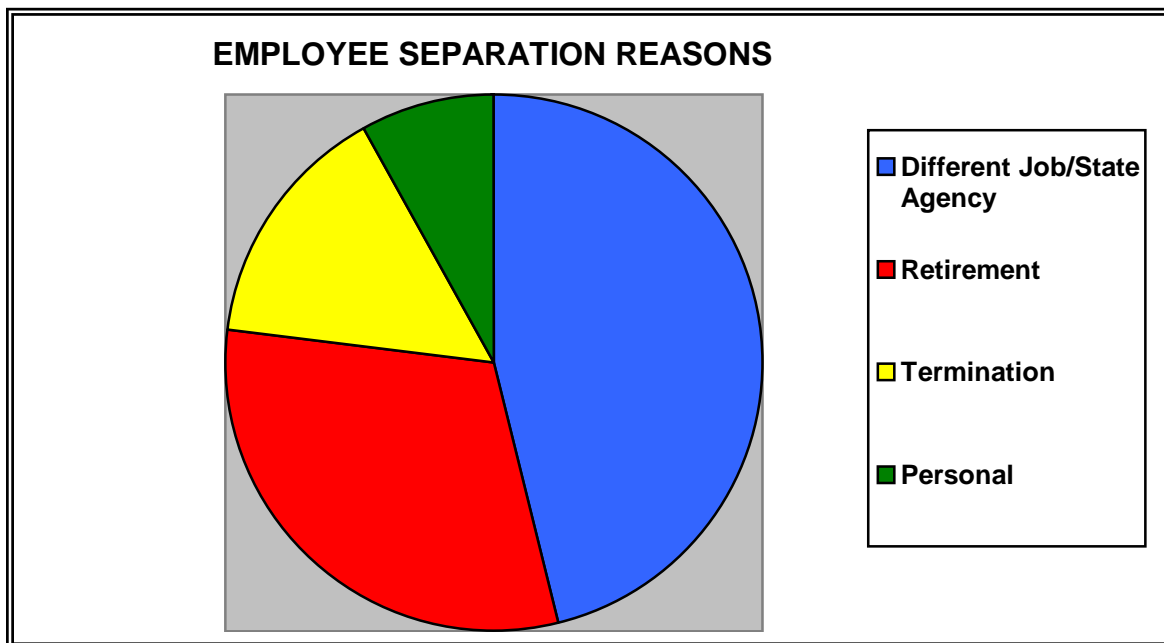
In FY 2007, the average dollar spent per case in BEP increased by 47%. This increase was due to the opening of new vendor locations as well as the continual need to maintain existing vendor locations.

#### 7.4. What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of Human Resource results?



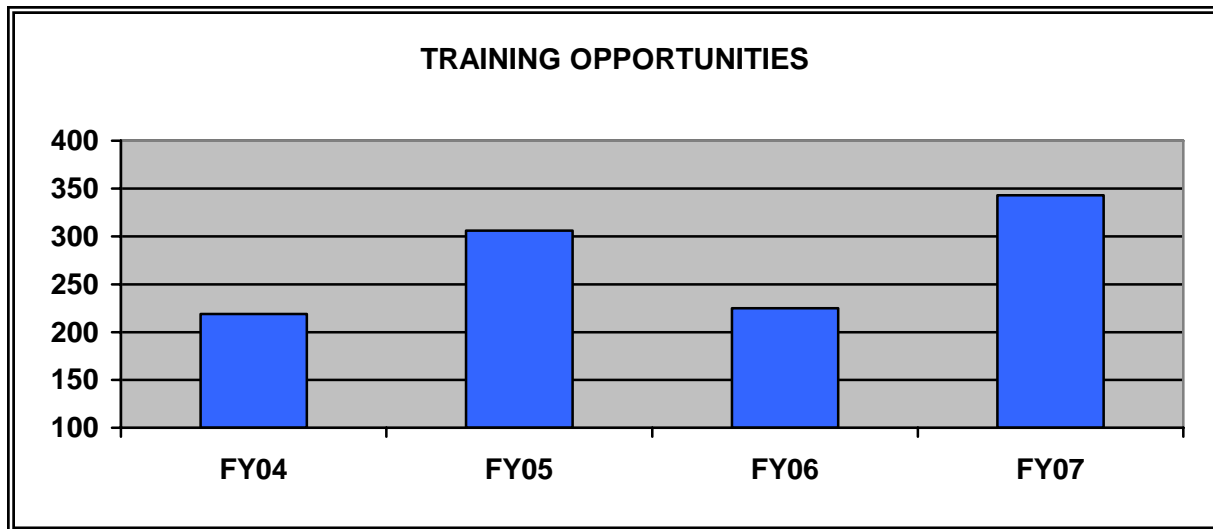
**Figure 7.4-1**

In FY 2007, 52% of SCCB staff received an “Exceeds” rating. Training sessions on the EPMS process will be conducted with Senior Management and supervisors to reduce the occurrence of “Meets by Default” ratings.



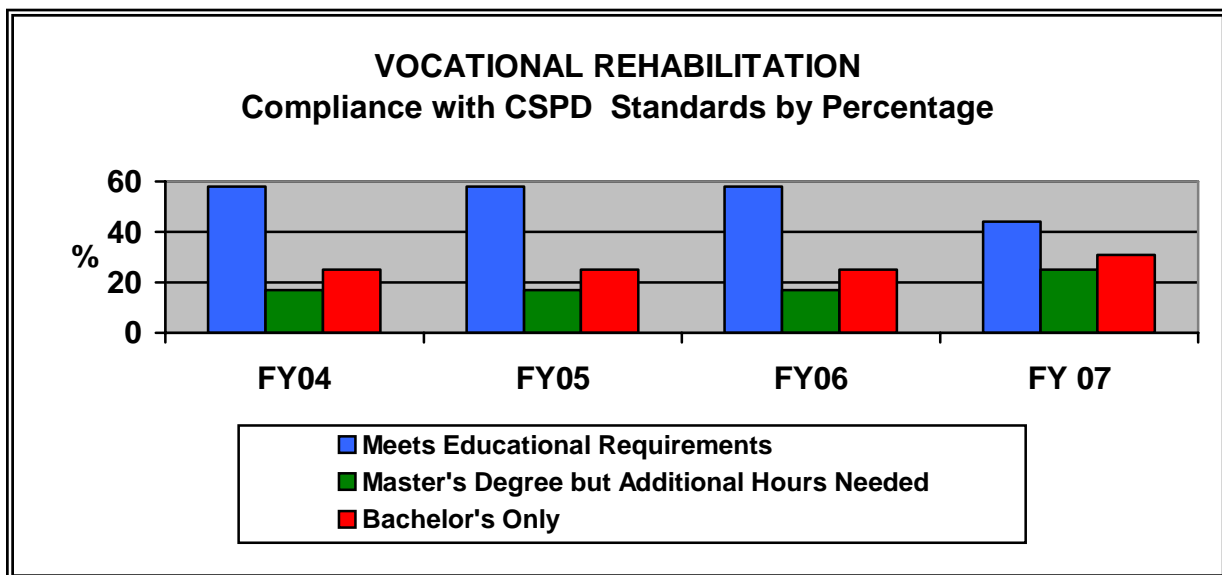
**Figure 7.4-2**

In FY 2007, the primary reason employees left the agency was to pursue other employment opportunities and increase earning potential.



**Figure 7.4-3**

In FY 2007, there was a 52% increase in the availability of training opportunities.

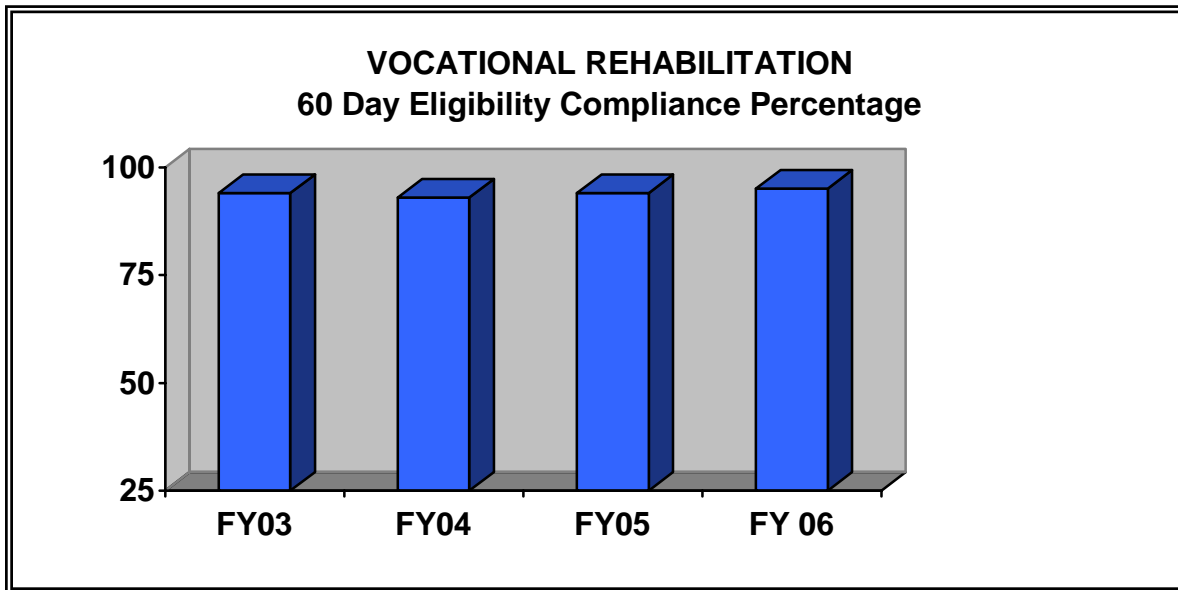


**Figure 7.4-4**

In FY 2007, compliance with the educational requirements of the CSPD (Comprehensive System of Personnel Development) decreased by 14% due to the addition of five VR Counselors, most of whom were in need of additional course work in order to obtain the required Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.

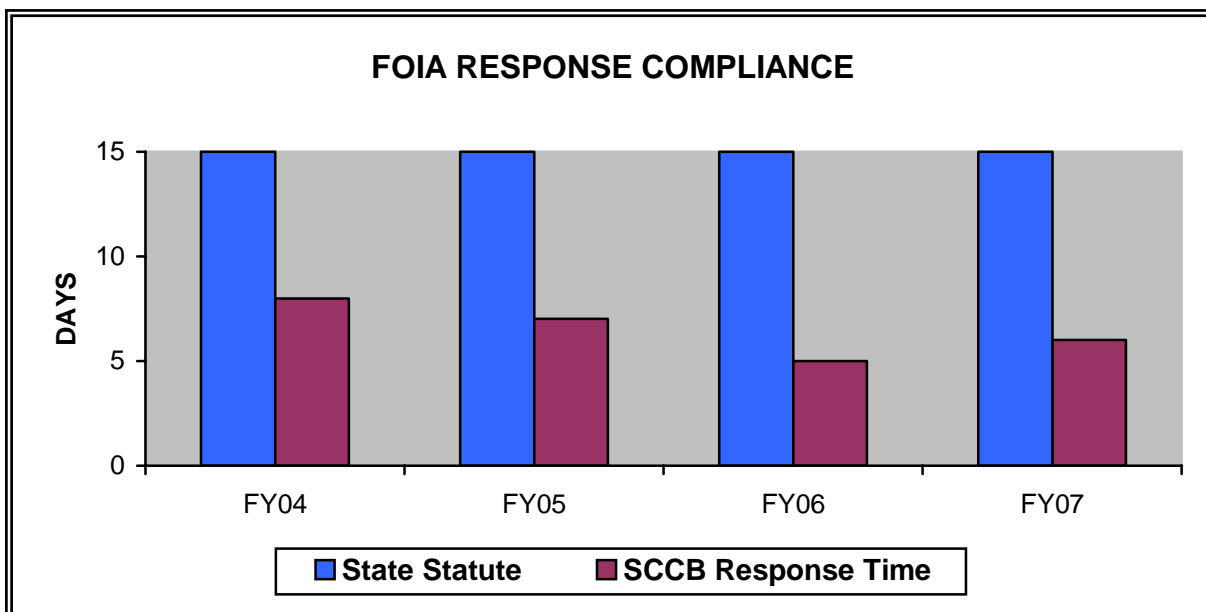


**7.5. What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of regulatory/legal compliance and community support?**



**Figure 7.5-1**

In FY 2007, the 60 day eligibility compliance rate has remained consistent compared to previous fiscal years.



**Figure 7.5-2**

State statute requires that all FOIA request are responded to within 15 working days. Since FY 2004, SCCB has consistently maintained a response time well below the required state statute response time by at least 53%.